

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 ASMARA 00349 190837Z

46

ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 IO-03 EUR-08 NEA-06

L-01 SSO-00 DODE-00 MC-01 PM-03 SP-02 INR-05 CIAE-00

PRS-01 SCCT-01 SY-02 OC-01 OPR-01 USSS-00 /059 W

----- 115982

R 190730Z MAR 75

FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3278

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

USMISSION USUN

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY SANAA

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

CINCUSNAVEUR

COMNAVTELCOM

USCINCEUR

COMIDEASTFOR

NAVCOMMUNIT ASMARA

NAVCOMMSTA NEA MAKRI

DIRNSA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0349

LIMDIS NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS ET

SUBJ: ERITREA-FIRST LOCAL REACTION TO ANNOUNCEMENT OF AMMO RE-

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PAGE 02 ASMARA 00349 190837Z

SUPPLY

REF: A) ASMARA 0338 (NOTAL); B) ASMARA 0344 (NOTAL)

1. IN 18 MARCH CONVERSATION, WITH FAIRLY RELIABLE SOURCE, BELIEVED TO HAVE DIRECT LINKS WITH ELF/PLF, CONS OFF DISCUSSED USG RESPONSE TO EPMG REQUEST FOR AMMO. SOURCE RAISED SUBJECT EVEN THOUGH HE HAD NOT HEARD VOA BROADCAST WHICH SOME ERITREANS HAD BEEN DISCUSSING ON 18 MARCH IN ASMARA. SOURCE ASSERTED THAT USG EMPLOYEES IN ASMARA WILL BE TARGETS FOR ELF/PLF REPRISALS, BUT ADMITTED THAT MILITARY SECURITY IN ASMARA NOW HEAVY ENOUGH TO PROBABLY ELIMINATE ANY SERIOUS THREAT FOR THE PRESENT. HE FEELS THAT IF ASMARA BEGINS TO RETURN TO NORMAL AND IF SECURITY IS RELAXED, ELF/PLF WILL AGAIN STRIKE SELECTED TARGETS IN ASMARA, INCLUDING USG PERSONNEL AND INSTALLATIONS. DUE TO LOGISTICAL PROBLEMS INVOLVED IN KIDNAPPING, HE THINKS ATTEMPT WILL BE TO ASSASSINATE RATHER THAN KIDNAP USG PERSONNEL. HE SAID FIGHTING WILL BE WORSE NEXT TIME BECAUSE ELF/PLF CONFIDENT OF ITS STRENGTH.

2. CONS OFF QUERIED SOURCE ON LACK OF INSURGENT MILITARY ACTIVITY IN ADDIS ABABA. SOURCE SAID ELF/PLF LEADERS, WHO MET NEAR ASMARA A FEW WEEKS AGO, DECIDED SUCH ACTIVITY WOULD BE BADLY RECEIVED IN THE PRESS, AND THUS COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE. HE SAID UP TO 400 ELF MEMBERS HAD BEEN STATIONED IN ADDIS ABABA FOR POSSIBLE ATTACKS.

3. SOURCE AGAIN PRESSED CONS OFF FOR MEDICAL ASSISTANCE MENTIONED IN REF B. CONS OFF REPLIED REQUEST RECEIVING CONSIDERATION.

4. SOURCE IDENTIFIED FATHER AUGUSTINO, AND GRAZ. SEYOUM MASSHO AS TWO OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE OF 38, WHO HAD BEEN ARRESTED AS RESULT OF THEIR PREVIOUS FORTHRIGHT STATEMENTS AGAINST EPMG POLICY IN ERITREA.
SHERRY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY ASSISTANCE, LIBERATION FRONTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 MAR 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: buchantr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975ASMARA00349
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750095-1155
From: ASMARA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750338/aaaabhuc.tel
Line Count: 94
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: 75 ASMARA 0338, 75 (NOTA ASMARA 0344
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: buchantr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 MAY 2003 by ElyME>; APPROVED <08 OCT 2003 by buchantr>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ERITREA-FIRST LOCAL REACTION TO ANNOUNCEMENT OF AMMO RE- CONFIDENTIAL
TAGS: PINS, MASS, ASEC, ET, US, ELF, PLF
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006